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ABSTRACT

This publication is designed to help Neighborhood Networks centers create programs that meet the goals of adult literacy learners. (The centers provide residents of federally assisted or insured properties with training in economic self-sufficiency.) Chapter 1 highlights the special characteristics of adult learners--the challenges they face and what motivates them to acquire and strengthen their basic skills. Chapter 2 explores how to get started and choose the best methods and tools for a center: identifying and assessing adult new readers; designing a work plan; finding the right tools; using methods that lead toward self-sufficiency; using technology to develop reading skills; and rewarding progress. Chapter 3 offers links to resources that can aid in setting up programs. It includes the following: resource lists; names of organizations; lists of conferences and professional development opportunities; curriculum, projects, and lesson plans; assessment tools; publications and books; educational software: information and publishers; and web sites. Appendixes include writing and reading skills checklists and information on the language experience approach. (YLB)

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ED 433 452

ENGAGING ADULTS IN LITERACY PROGRAMS AT NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS CENTERS

JUNE 1999

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This publication was developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to assist in the planning and development of Neighborhood Networks centers.

The guides in this series offer "how to" information on starting up a center, creating programs and identifying center partners; center and program profiles and a wealth of resources.

Neighborhood Networks is a community-based initiative established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 1995. Since then, hundreds of centers have opened throughout the United States. These centers provide residents of HUD-assisted and/or -insured properties with programs, activities and training promoting economic self-sufficiency. These guides contain examples of successful center initiatives and how you can replicate them.

To receive copies of this publication or any others in the series, contact:

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All publications are available from the Neighborhood Networks website at:

www.neighborhoodnetworks.org

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Engaging Adults in Literacy Programs at Neighborhood Networks Centers

Introduction

In 1992, the National Adult Literacy Survey documented that nearly 40 million adults across America could not read well enough to meet the high literacy demands of an information-driven society.

The lack of basic reading, writing, information and computing skills holds people back from reaching their personal and career goals. It can also make financial self-sufficiency nearly impossible.

Fortunately, there are tools and methods that can successfully help adults gain these basic skills. This document is designed to help Neighborhood Networks centers create programs that meet the goals of adult literacy learners.

- Chapter One highlights the special characteristics of adult learners – the challenges they face and what motivates them to acquire and strengthen their basic skills.
- Chapter Two explores how to get started and choose the best methods and tools for your center.
- Chapter Three offers links to resources that can aid in setting up programs.
- The appendices provide special checklists and tools to help you identify and serve adult new readers.

Chapter 1

About Adult Learners

Teaching adults is not the same as teaching children. Not only is the learning process itself different, but adults have other considerations, responsibilities and issues.

Time. Family responsibilities and work obligations vastly limit the amount of time adults have to spend on educational pursuits. Knowing your clients' time constraints and keeping computers free for them will be especially helpful. Engaging adult learners in meaningful activities where they can see visible gains in their skills will keep them coming back.

Motivation. Adults willingly engage in learning experiences that they perceive are important – that will help them be better parents, for example, or find better jobs. Learning is usually a means to a concrete end, often sought out because of a specific change in the adult's life. The new learner may have become a parent, lost a loved one who provided economic support or moved to a new country. What the adult learns at your center should connect meaningfully to that event. Find out what motivates each adult to seek learning at your center and design a work plan with them that responds to that situation. The more the learning links to life goals, the more willing the adult will be to commit long enough to sustain growth.

Self Esteem. Adults feel vulnerable in unfamiliar learning environments. Many have had bad classroom experiences which made them especially cautious about entering a learning setting where someone might make fun of them, lose patience or make them feel foolish. You can reduce anxieties by using an informal but respectful and friendly approach. Present an accurate picture of what the adult learners will be doing and show the physical layout. Make sure you let them know it's okay to ask questions and introduce them to the people who will be working alongside.

Life Experience. Adults bring with them a great deal of life experience into new learning situations. Capitalize on that by helping adults recognize what they already know or do well. Then connect that to the skill they are about to learn. This will help adult learners integrate and remember new skills and ideas. Adults tend to forget unfamiliar things taught out of a meaningful context.

For example, when teaching how to use a word processor, be sure to ask the adult learners what they know about the typewriter keyboard. Extend that knowledge by showing them several new functions on the computer keyboard. Likewise, when talking about a database, ask the learners how they keep their own addresses organized. If they say they frequently lose addresses, discuss creating a database as a solution. And make sure you talk about a database all adults recognize – the phone book.

Practice. Adults need time to practice their new skills without judgment. Part of creating a risk-free environment that supports learning is respecting your learners' need to go slow. Adults may need to ask the same question more than once and practice to gain proficiency before moving on to the next skill.

Involvement. Adults direct their energies toward that which is most important to them. Their involvement therefore fluctuates. At times, the adult learner may not seem interested or involved in an activity that is important to you. Don't force things. Your responsibility is to help adults learn what's important to them.

Confidentiality. Confidentiality is essential in forging a respectful relationship with adults who need to work on their reading and writing skills. But respecting their privacy doesn't mean adults need to work in isolation. Asking questions, sharing information, giving and receiving positive feedback and collaborating on a project are all building blocks for learning, especially where technology is involved. Try not to attach the label "literacy" to these learners since it has a negative connotation.

Chapter 2

Getting Started and Finding the Right Methods and Tools

Going the Extra Mile to Attract Adult New Readers

Although fliers, meetings and word of mouth will get the news out, adult new readers may need special assurances to take the first step. They most probably perceive their low basic skills as an insurmountable obstacle to using technology. They may be hesitant to enter an environment they don't understand – one which is almost certain to reveal their deficits.

You can ease the transition by finding volunteers from the community who are trusted and respected. Their friendly faces and knowledge of the community will help you bring potential literacy students through your doors. Later on, these volunteers can act as a liaison between the new readers and your staff. They can help identify fears or problems, encourage your learners or simply find out why they're having a bad day.

Holding special functions of interest to the community in your technology center could be another way of bringing potential literacy students through your doors. For example, when you invite a person from a local day care facility to give a talk on parenting issues, have the computers booted with software applications and learning products displayed. Tack your own informal, friendly presentation onto the end and invite people to stay and look around. Bring home the point that computers have something to offer all visitors. They can be used in myriad ways.

Identifying and Assessing Adult New Readers

Adults who need to work on reading and writing will usually tell you at the outset to avoid later embarrassment. You should inform them immediately that this information will be kept confidential – and that you are highly confident they can still use the computer technology successfully. Let them know you will work with them to set up a comfortable program that meets their special needs and goals and assure your adult new readers that people will be on hand to respond to their questions.

An informal assessment will enable you to develop a work plan and a starting point for each of your adult new readers. You can do the assessment in a one-on-one interview, asking questions to get an idea of each adult's reading and writing level, goals and needs, interests and skills.

Skill Checklists can be very helpful in making your assessment. The Skill Checklists for Writing and Reading starting on page 15 of this document are designed to help you initiate an informal discussion. You don't have to stick precisely to the questions here. Remember, this is not a formal assessment tool.[1] Your questions will probably vary depending on the learner. In any event, the questioning shouldn't be too long or daunting.

During this interview, find out if the adult has vision problems. Using a larger font size can make a big difference for many people. In fact, adjusting the font size may be the first feature you teach your adult learner. It will reinforce what you have been saying from the start – that technology is a wonderful tool that will make their learning easier and fun.

Leave time at the end of this first meeting to give a tour of the facilities, a brief overview of the technology and a chance for the adult to type his or her name and address onto a word processor and print it out. This last important step will show learners that they can use computers successfully even without keyboarding skills. Remember, they may need time to locate the letters on the keyboard.

Designing a Work Plan

You and the adult learner can now begin to work together to develop a meaningful work plan. The work plan should respect the learner's goals and needs, and make the best use of his or her time. The

Checklists that start on page 15 suggest meaningful activities to get started for each reading and writing level. Work plans will also vary from center to center.

- ❑ A work plan to fill an hour for a beginning reader might have two activities:
  - 15 minutes developing mouse skills using a game such as *Solitaire*.
  - 45 minutes typing and finishing a language experience story (see Appendix B).
- ❑ A work plan to fill 90 minutes for an adult learner at a higher basic reading level might look like this:
  - 45 minutes using Storybook Weaver, a word processor that allows users to add illustrated pictures to the stories they write. The stories print out looking like a children's book. The learner can use a real family story and read it aloud to his or her children.
  - 15 minutes to practice typing to build speed and increase productivity for a business environment. Adults will also value this practice time because their speed gives them a visible way of measuring how their skill levels are growing.
  - 30 minutes playing a computer game for relaxation while developing mouse or problem solving skills. Or using programs such as Print Shop Deluxe (by Broderbund) or Print Artist (by Maxis) to make a birthday card. Or adding a new name and address to a database. Or participating in a center discussion on safe uses of the Internet for kids.

It is important that the work plan offer adults a routine. That will help your learners feel grounded at the center as they get familiar with the new experience and take charge of their own learning. The work plan should develop around concrete milestones or short-term goals so learners can track their accomplishments.

The first milestones may be to learn how to open and close programs, save and print texts or indent paragraphs when writing a letter. When goals are broken down this way, adults can score new achievements in almost every lesson.

Make sure you monitor as much of the hands-on activity as you can. Invite questions as you do and make suggestions. This way, you create opportunities to steer them toward new levels of understanding. Your prompts can lead adult learners to discover an answer or solution of immediate relevance to their work, thereby making them feel competent.

Some adults feel self-conscious about having their writing visible to others on a computer screen. Put these learners at computers where screens face a wall – or at least don't face a door. This gives them the extra comfort level they need to work without marking them as different.

The work plans will probably contain a flexible format and use a combination of typing, productivity tools, Internet use and educational software.

Finding the Right Tools

Can Adult New Readers Use Productivity Tools?

Yes. They should begin using productivity tools at the start. Some tools, however, are easier to use than others.

For example, office software, such as Microsoft Word, can overwhelm the new reader with all of its drop-down lists, dialog box options and tab, text and check boxes. Instead, try to select an easier software tool, such as ClarisWorks, Microsoft Works or Lotus Office Suite.

All-in-one productivity software is easier to learn because the word processor, database, spreadsheet and drawing tool all share the same simple commands and procedures. The menu and tool bars are less cluttered and provide fewer options. But these programs still offer the same basic functions and are organized in the same fashion as the high powered office software – Microsoft Word, Excel and Access. Students can get started on them right away

and later easily transfer to the more complex office tools.

Part of the work plan should include working with a word processor, database or spreadsheet. Although you could begin with any of these, most people start with the word processor because it is the most familiar and can hook into what they already know about typewriters.

As you use these tools, be sure to use the terminology. Don't say 'click up here'. Use the terms, 'click on that dialog box', or ' find it on the tool bar.' That way, adults can begin to absorb the terminology they will need later when they develop a marketable skill such as using the word processor.

Keystrokes To Literacy (National Textbook Company, 1991) by Antonia Stone is a good resource for helping adults learn to use productivity tools. It offers dozens of concrete activities that teach specific computer skills.

What Should I Look for in Packaged, Educational Software?

Educational software has come a long way. There are CD-ROM programs that combine sound, graphics and animation to create a stimulating multimedia learning experience that allows adults to practice at their own rate to achieve proficiency.

When choosing packaged software, take into account how much CD-ROM technology can do to make learning more enjoyable. Good software offers virtual environments and uses sound, graphics and animation in meaningful ways. Avoid any software that is no more than a workbook on a screen. For example, GED software should go beyond providing a paragraph of text and multiple choice questions.

ESL (English as a Second Language) software should provide multimedia learning aids that include video dialogues, graphic illustrations of common words, phrases and cultural icons, or buttons that provide native pronunciations of core sounds. The content should be in small segments offering many different vocabulary and pronunciation activities.

With the latest ESL software, the user can listen to native speakers pronouncing words from real life dialogues. Other features include recording options so learners can compare their diction to the teaching software and speech recognition technology that evaluates responses and provides feedback. When previewing software, also check to see if the software adjusts to the user's skill level, provides flexible options for users to work at their own pace and allows learners a way to easily check their progress.

Whatever software you choose, make sure adult learners preview and evaluate it along with you. Examine its interactivity. Is it grown up? Does it make sense and offer learners opportunities to practice and get feedback? Is it fun and absorbing? Check how the information is organized. It should be easy for learners to navigate without your help – especially to exit, go backward and forward, and quit. Check out the pop-up menus and click on the icons to see what is offered and to make sure they work.

Can Adult New Readers Begin Using Information Tools on CD-ROMs?

Adults with some reading skills can use tools, such as multimedia encyclopedias. These wonderful programs can stimulate the imagination and help students develop basic information finding and research skills. Also, they will help adults learn about navigating in a nonlinear, electronic environment. This important skill will be especially useful when they start using the Internet.

Try to show your learners the possibilities for interactivity without focusing on reading the text. For example, CD-ROM encyclopedias offer photographs, sounds, film clips and animations. Ask a learner or group of learners to find a sound clip, picture or film clip of an important event to watch, listen to or look at – and then write about.

For example, ask your learners to write down the topic of interest, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Then show them how to find the index text box on an encyclopedia and let them type the name themselves. Ask them to find and listen to a speech (check to make sure a speech is there!). Ask them to write about the experience using a word processor. This would be a good group activity. Learners could help each other input the name, and find and click on the speech.

An atlas program is also very useful. Even beginning readers can find a map of their country that they can then cut and paste into a short piece they are writing on the word processor. Most atlas programs offer charts, graphs and demographics. Several adults working together on a simple project easily can access this information, comparing populations or literacy rates on a spreadsheet. In doing so, they begin to learn about alphabetizing information, reading information in charts and the difference between the political and typographical maps. Also, they can learn how to use the scroll bar, pop-up menus and dialog boxes. Many Internet sites offer maps.

Is It Useful for Adults to Use Games and Adventure Software?

Yes. Many adults have a preconceived idea that learning should be difficult and serious, requiring them to plod through lots of boring exercises. Adults need to find out that learning can be fun. Problem solving and thinking skills are developed while playing a game and sometimes, adults just need to reward themselves for all the hard work they put into writing a story on a word processor.

The game of *Solitaire* offers a great way for new users to develop mouse skills. Most adults will readily recognize this game. Spending part of those first sessions getting the hang of the computer mouse while playing this game will provide the adult with confidence to tackle the next task.

Should Adults Learn to Keyboard Before They Use a Word Processor?

No, adult learners don't need keyboarding skills to compose text. But many adults will want to work on their typing skills since these are marketable. Learning the keyboard can be a milestone that gives a sense of accomplishment. You may want to build practice time on a typing program into the adult learner's work plan from the start.

Using Methods That Lead Toward Self-Sufficiency

Good tools and the right methods can help adults gain confidence, find their own learning approaches and become more self-sufficient. As they become confident users of technology, they will require less time from you and your staff.

Writing With Word Processors. Begin by introducing adults to the function keys they'll need to get started – the enter/return key, shift key, space bar and backspace. Make sure they know where to find the period and question mark and briefly explain word wrap so they are not using the enter key at the end of each line.

At the beginning, you will want to teach your adults about saving text. Most will need to lose text before they really get the "save and save often" motto. From the start, teach skills, such as starting a new document, printing, opening a document, and opening and closing an application tool. Teach by talking the new user through the steps. This is a good time for new readers to begin learning to recognize words such as file, save, print, print preview, edit, cut, copy, paste, insert and format. As they learn to write, they are also reading. For this reason, you may want to teach them to find and click on these words in the menu before you show them the shortcuts on the tool bar.

Writing. Writing is a process. Typically, it begins with brainstorming followed by creating a first draft. Next comes rereading, revising and editing the text. When the text is finished, it is ready to be printed. Everyone struggles with evolving texts – not just adult new readers. Fortunately, word processors can make that struggle much easier.

Revising and Editing. Adults who are just learning to write often say they hate their texts because they are messy. Words are scratched out and drafts are hard to change because they have to be handwritten all over again. Your learners will be delighted when you show them how easy it is to delete text using the backspace key or by selecting and deleting. The spell-check will give them a way to control spelling problems, and the cut and paste feature will give them the capability of moving text around without tedious rewriting or retyping. The computer is wonderful for these purposes. You won't have to tell them; they'll get that on their own.

What adults like to write about. For most of us, coming up with topics is the hardest part of writing. Adults need to write about things that are meaningful to them, such as family or goals. Avoid artificial writing topics. You can help your learners find a topic that connects to their lives through a brief discussion or a good question such as: Why don't you tell me more about your daughter? Or why did you immigrate to the United States? Photographs can also be a big help. Keep a folder of photographs snipped from magazines and newspapers. Or ask your learners to bring a photograph of someone they will write about. Better yet, show them how to scan the picture in once the writing is finished.

Using Technology to Develop Reading Skills

The Language Experience Approach. Adult literacy programs are increasingly using a method known as the Language Experience Approach. It was developed to create reading material for non-reading adults by using the learner's own dictated words as text. After interviewing your learner, use a word processor to type in his or her exact words – just three or four sentences. Have the student reread the text several times and type it over again. More information about the Language Experience Approach can be found on page 18.

If your word processor offers a synthesized speech feature, your learners can listen to text that is highlighted. Adults can highlight and listen to the text until they can read it through on their own, freeing you to do other things.

Educational software. You may want to choose educational software that provides a more structured approach to learning phonics or developing a sight word vocabulary and reading strategies. You can read more about such software beginning on page 13. The information under packaged, educational software applies here also in making selections. This software should never be used in exclusion to productivity tools and the Internet.

Projects adults can do together. A group of adults can organize their learning around a common goal by doing a joint project. In the process, they can develop their reading, writing, information and technology skills in a meaningful context.

For example, adults can create and publish their own anthologies around popular themes including their families, autobiographical narratives and immigration stories. Recipe books or neighborhood guides to "the best" are also fun to write. A group could compile a database of books to keep in the home, videos to watch or worthwhile family TV programs. Other group projects could include holiday cards made on Print Shop Deluxe or a brochure with tips to help their kids succeed in school. Chapter 3 includes suggested resources for project-based learning and websites.

Using the Internet. Adult new readers *can* use the Internet. Although the web is very print-driven, it can be made manageable for people with weak reading skills. Try to find Internet sites that offer audio, photographs or maps so learners are not overwhelmed with print.

Remember that adults have an important incentive for learning how to use this tool – their kids. They'll want to track their children's Internet use. Focusing lessons around issues of parenting and controlling use of the Internet will be of high value for adults. You may want to show them how they can keep track of the websites their kids are visiting or ways to talk to their kids about what they are learning on the Internet.

E-mail and keypals can be a great way for adults to develop writing as a vital communication tool. Neighborhood Networks centers around the country can work together to find keypals for their learners.

Rewarding Progress

In order to keep coming back, adults need to see their progress and feel that they are making headway. Several initiatives can clearly communicate this to them.

Encourage learners to create some sort of product with each visit that they can take home. Make sure that there is enough time to print out their work. Set up folders for them to store copies of their work over time, so they can watch them pile up.

Be sure to attach value to the struggle and failures that are inherent to using unfamiliar tools as much as you do final products. Adult learners will feel safe in their explorations when you acknowledge them in private or verbally.

Celebrate their work by inviting learners to post their work on a bulletin board, or hold a writing celebration where people can read their work out loud to each other and applaud at the end, or design a certificate that acknowledges attendance, hours spent exploring a program or landmarks reached. As a matter of fact, have the learner design and generate his/her own with a staff person signing off.

Chapter 3

Resources

Resource Lists

You can begin your search for adult literacy resources at http://www.literacyonline.org/. This website contains a list of organizations that provide information about technology planning, implementation and education.

Literacy List at *http://www2wgbh.org/mbcweis/ltc/alri/websites.html* provides a comprehensive, updated listed of Adult Literacy, ESOL and Family Literacy websites.

A listing of State Literacy Resource Centers is at http://www.state.ky.us/agencies/wforce/adult/slrc.htm

Organizations

A range of national and regional agencies offer adult literacy resources at their websites, plus links to other useful sites.

National Center for Adult Literacy (NCAL). This website offers a variety of resources, including the Educational Technology Resources for Adults. *http://ncal.literacy.upenn.edu/*

National Center for Family Literacy is a nonprofit organization supporting family literacy across America through programming, training, research and information dissemination. *http://www.famlit.org/*

National Institute For Literacy (NIFL). This website offers directories of resources and links to NIFL's four regional centers, each providing rich collections of literacy resources. It also lists toll-free numbers of organizations dealing with literacy and learning disabilities. *http://novel.nifl.gov/*

System for Adult Basic Education (ABE) Support is a Massachusetts-based training and technical assistance initiative for ABE practitioners and programs. Its website offers useful information and links to other important resources. *http://www.sabes.org/*

Outreach and Technical Assistance Network (OTAN) is funded by the California Department of Education. It provides technical assistance to adult education providers in California, online resources, and government and grant information. *http://www.otan.dni.us/*

Literacy Assistance Center is a New York-based technical assistance center. *http://www.lacnyc.org/*

Midwest LINCs provides links to national, regional and state-specific resource materials for adult literacy practitioners. *http://literacy.kent.edu/Midwest*

National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center provides a resource guide with information on assessment and treatment for adults with learning disabilities. *http://novel.nifl.gov/nalld/resource.htm*

Conferences and Professional Development

National Education Computing Conference (NECC) is sponsored by the National Educational Computing Association. It offers hands-on workshops, lectures, interactive sessions, presentations with key industry speakers and a very large vendor exhibition. Conference participants can develop new technology skills; learn about funding, development, maintenance and support; learn how to develop strategies that reach target audiences, like adult literacy students; and learn the latest in using the Internet, CD-ROMs and distance learning. *http://www.neccsite.org/*

Florida Educational Technology Conference (FETC) attracts educators nationwide. Teachers, principals, technical personnel and industry leaders gather to share and discover ways of reaching reluctant learners. This conference also offers a large software vendor exhibit. *http://www.fetc.org/*

Technology, Reading and Learning Difficulties (TRLD). This conference offers both hands-on

workshops and presentations on technology as it applies to learning difficulties. Featured are ways multimedia, web-based instruction, word processors, speech recognition and text reading technologies can enhance instruction. The conference has an adult literacy component offering workshops in motivating reluctant readers and writers. Call Educational Computer Conferences at 1-888-594-1249.

Telecommunications/Multimedia in Education Conference (Tel*Ed) is sponsored by the International Society for Technology in Education. Workshops explore many areas including access issues, the impact of the Internet on learning, creating global communities and safety on the web. *http://www.iste.org/*

Curriculum, Projects and Lesson Plans

PBS's Literacy Link is funded by the U.S. Department of Education Star Schools Project. It was created to integrate instructional video and online computer technology to help adult learners advance their GED and workplace skills. It offers professional training and development resources. *http://www.pbs.org/* (click on *Adult Literacy* or *Literacy Link*)

Literacy Assistance Center conducted a 2-day technology Institute sponsored by NetTech and in collaboration with the Eastern Lincs projects. If you click on the Web-based Lesson Plan Gallery at their site, you can see the lesson plans developed by the participants of this project. *http://www.lacnyc.org/*

Browsing through projects completed by adult learners can suggest ideas for projects for your learners. *http://members.aol.com/CulebraMom/pblprt.html*

More resources for teaching adult literacy and basic education students about computers and the Internet can be found at *http://easternlincs.worlded.org*

Assessment Tools

The following resources can guide you toward an appropriate assessment tool.

- National Center of Adult Literacy *http://www.ncal.literacy.upenn.edu/*
- National Institute For Literacy *http://novel.nifl.gov/*
- Literacy Volunteers of America *http://www.literacyvolunteers.org/*

Publications and Books

International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) offers a wide selection of books and periodicals. Books cover a range of topics, including using software tools such as ClarisWorks or Microsoft Office for educational purposes, web publishing, guides to educational websites, multimedia, technology planning, funding, community relations, assessment and equipment.

ISTE also publishes Learning and Leading With Technology, 8 times a year. The publication is filled with ideas, resources and information about support. *http://www.iste.org/*

Electronic Learning. This magazine covers the most recent trends in using technology as a learning tool and software reviews. *http://www.wienerart.com/studio/portfolio/EL/elhome.html*

Keystrokes To Literacy by Antonia Stone is sold through New Readers Press for $23.95 at 1-800-448-8878.

Surfing for Substance: A Professional Development Guide to Integrating the World Wide Web into Adult Literacy Instruction by Emily Hacker is an easy-to-use book packed with ideas to help teachers and facilitators learn how to construct meaningful web-based instructional activities. It was developed by the Literacy Assistance Center through support from MetTech. To request a copy, call 1-212-803-3300 or visit their website at *http://www.lacnyc.org*

Educational Software: Information and Publishers

New software and websites are constantly coming out on the market. PC Magazine offers excellent reviews on the best websites and CD-ROM software. Check out these issues each year:

- February for the 100 best websites
- November for the top 100 CD-ROMs

The Learning Company website offers a free online classroom flier, resource center, information about conferences and sample lesson plans.
http://www.learningco.com/

Tom Snyder Productions website offers lesson ideas, Internet tips and web links. If you click on their conference schedule, you can get the dates and locations of technology and computing conferences..
http://www.teachtsp.com/

Websites

There's a complete listing of virtual museums at
http://www.icom.org/vlmp/world.html

You can click on audio symbols and listen to news reports that coincide with the words on the screen at *http://www.cbs.com/ and http://www.cnn.com/*

You can cut and paste maps into a word processor using the right mouse button from
http://www.mapblast.com/

If your students enjoy music, *http://www.lyrics.ch/search.html* has the lyrics to their favorite songs. In finding lyrics, they'll learn about searching for information on the web, entering a question into a text box and printing.

You can listen to the web at
http://www.audionnet.com/

Appendix A

Skills Checklist

This checklist can be used in an informal discussion to find out the approximate skill level of adult new readers and writers. It is __ an assessment tool. Launch the discussion by asking the adult about how they use reading and

Skills

Writing and reading are presented in separate charts because adults are often better readers than writers be comfortable reading newspapers, but are still at the beginning stages of writing.

Writing

Skills	Writing Activities To Start With
Level 1. Does very little writing ❑ Writes name and address on forms ❑ Signs greeting cards	1. Add 1–2 sentences to a Language Experience story 2. Write a short narrative (2–3 sentences) about self, goals, family member using a word processor. Then add a graphic or scan a photograph into that document 3. Make a greeting card or letterhead
Level 2. Uses a limited selection of words to address real life needs, such as: ❑ Fills out a money order ❑ Jots down items on shopping list ❑ Keeps information on a calendar	1. Write short narratives about self, goals, family members and important events, using a word processor. Then add a graphic or scan a photograph into the document 2. Make a greeting card, calendar or letterhead 3. Organize vocabulary words into a database 4. Cut and paste a picture from a CD-ROM, into a word processing document and write about it 5. Use bullets and numbering to make a list 6. Participate in an online chat group
Level 3. Puts whole thoughts on paper and is confident enough to communicate with others in writing. The following are some examples of uses of writing: ❑ Jots down notes to self ❑ Writes notes to a child's teacher ❑ Writes letters to family member(s)	1. Write narratives about self, goals, family members and events, using a word processor. Then add graphics or scan photographs into the document 2. Make a greeting card, calendar or letterhead 3. Find a map or photograph on a CD-ROM, and add it to a word processing document 4. Use CD-ROM encyclopedias to write short research paper about an event or hero 5. Send e-mail to keypal
Level 4. Uses writing to think and communicate and is ready to work on passing an entrance test, or brushing up on business writing. ❑ Fills out a job application on a timely basis ❑ Writes business letters, such as requests for information or letters of complaint ❑ Keeps journal	1. Create a business letter, using tabs and margins 2. Create a resume using word processor and font, bullets and margin features 3. Write narratives about self, goals, family members or important events, using a word processor and adding graphics or scanning pictures 4. Create a newsletter on a topic of interest, such as events at the technology center or news items 5. Use a spreadsheet to set up a budget

Reading

Reading ability is not only determined by *what* people read, but also *how* they *use* reading in their lives.

Skill	Reading Activities To Start With
Level 1. Non-readers are not in the habit of looking at print in their environment. They use other strategies to get information. At this point, they may only recognize a few words, names and signs. ❑ Identifies own name and address on envelope ❑ Reads family names on greeting cards	1. Use word processor to write, print out and practice reading language experiences. They can take them home to reread 2. Create a greeting card Use a word processor to make a New Words List using center alignment, enlarged font sizes, or the bullets or numbers feature. They could collect words from their environment and then print out the list to review at home
Level 2. Beginning readers often use reading only to solve immediate information needs. The following are some examples: ❑ Can find a terminal of an arriving plane on an electronic display, often by matching up letters from a piece of paper ❑ Matches coupon to shelf item ❑ Can find a price on store flier ❑ Can find amount on utility bill	1. Use the word processor to practice reading with language experiences 2. Create cards, fliers, and banners 3. Organize names and addresses into a database 4. Use the Internet to find a news site that has audio, and listen to a story that is also visually displayed on the screen. The audio will supply support as the beginning reader learns other things they need to know about using the Internet. Then, write about the experience using a word processor 5. Find a picture of a famous person, or map of a place on a CD-ROM and write about it. By finding media, the new reader is not overwhelmed with print. At the same time, he/she starts to learn about how information is organized in an electronic environment
Level 3. At this level, readers can read simple texts and are using reading, with varied success, to find information or follow instructions. ❑ Can read jury summons ❑ Reads preparation instructions (for instance, on a frozen turkey) ❑ Reads a menu ❑ Reads highway signs ❑ Interprets train and bus schedules ❑ Uses an ATM machine	1. Create cards, fliers and banners. If they are self-employed, help them create fliers for their business 2. Learn about reading information in a table by organizing names and addresses, a CD collection, books read or anything into a database 3. As a group, find websites of interest on the Internet. Then the learner could write about the experience using a word processor 4. Find information, a map or a table on a CD-ROM and then write about it 5. Write a recipe on a word processor, using numbers and bullets to organize. This will help readers get the most out of reading recipes and any procedural information for that matter 6. Use a word processor to write about the steps in a procedure
Level 4. The adult is comfortable with reading, but may say improvement is needed in order to pass a test. In other words, test-taking skills are needed. ❑ Reads newspapers ❑ Reads own mail ❑ Reads out loud to a child ❑ Reads memos and instructions at work	1. Use the CD-ROM encyclopedias to research information for short reports 2. Find information using the Internet. For example, finding websites for their hobbies or favorite TV programs. They can also research the exam they have to take or employment opportunities for when they pass that exam 3. Develop the ability to read and use the menu bars, drop down menus and text boxes on productivity tools by creating things: a database of personal addresses, a spreadsheet of expenses or a letter and resume for a job

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Appendix B
The Language Experience Approach

Procedure for Creating a Language Experience Story[2]

1. Take time to find out what interests your learners. Language experiences can be launched from any discussion about goals, concerns, family stories or news events.
2. After your brief discussion in which the learners do most of the talking, explain that you are going to record what they said on the computer screen.
3. Using a clear, easy-to-read font on any word processor, write the short text using the student's own words. It's important that you use the student's exact words and language patterns.
4. Select and enlarge the text for easy reading. Then, pointing at each word, read through the text. Let learners practice reading the text until they can read through it without assistance.
5. Encourage learners to read for meaning. If a learner gets stuck on a word, encourage them to read ahead to the end of the sentence and then go back to try again to identify the word. Or, simply, supply the word.
6. Ask the learners to select one or two words to remember. Using Select and Underline functions, highlight these words.
7. If several learners are working together, get them engaged in an activity where they have to help each other copy and paste the text onto their own disks for further work.
8. Once learners have the text on their own disks, encourage them to reread it. You can have them add sentences to the text or use the selected vocabulary words in new sentences.
9. Keep In Mind: Use the learners' exact words. Spell words correctly, but don't change the words or the word order.

Tutor Guidelines for Writing Instruction[3]

Prewriting. The student experiments with ideas and chooses a topic. Take a few minutes to talk with students about potential topics. Use this time to get to know your students. Note their interests for possible topics later.

Drafting. Students write a first draft. The object here is for students to get their thoughts on paper. Spelling, sentence structure and grammar are not important now. It is difficult not to do so, but do not correct students' mechanics now. If a student asks for help with mechanics, say that there will be time later to work on those areas.

Sharing. The writer reads the piece aloud to the tutor, computer aide or a group of students. Respond to the writing after he or she has read it aloud. Questions you pose – tell me more about your daughter or what was it like coming to another country – will be used by writers to clarify the writing.

Revising. Based partly on feedback, each student expands ideas, clarifies meanings, reorganizes information. Each student now can make changes and additions. You should still stress getting information on paper rather than spelling and structure.

The students should go through this writing/sharing/revising process several times until the writing has been fully developed.

Editing. The student focuses on eliminating mechanical and grammatical errors. Encourage students to do as much of their own editing as possible. If grammar is a problem, you may ask students to print out their work and draw lines under the places where the language does not sound right. Then, provide assistance. This way the student sees how conventional punctuation, spelling and grammar are used to provide meaning.

Publishing. Students share their work with other students. Students should be encouraged to publish their writing to share with other students. Try to keep a bulletin board for posting finished work. Reading the writing of other students may help them identify topics that are important to them. Getting feedback on their writing from other students may help them improve as writers.

Endnotes

[1] Assessment tools must be administered consistently, used correctly and connected with your goals and outcomes.

[2] Adapted from an updated version of "The Language Experience Approach: A Tool for Reading Instruction" by Karen Griswold, Literacy Assistance Center, New York, New York.

[3] From Mosaic: Research Notes on Literacy, June 1991, Vol. 1 No. 2